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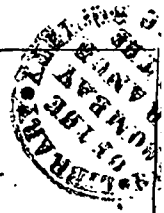

THE

EDUCATION

OF

THE HUMAN RACE.

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BY

GOTTHOLD EPHRAIM LESSING.

TRANSLATED BY THE LATE

REV. FRED. W. ROBERTSON, M.A.

THIRD EDITION.

"When I was a child, I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child; but when I became a man, I put away childish things."—ST. PAUL.

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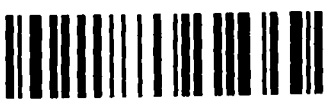
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THE EDUCATION OF THE HUMAN RACE.

THE REV. FRED. W. ROBERTSON, M.A.

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"Our little ſyſtems have their day;
They have their day, and ceaſe to be:
They are but broken lights of Thee,
And Thou, O Lord, art more than they.

"We have but faith, we cannot know;
For knowledge is of things we ſee;
And yet we truſt it comes from Thee,
A beam in darkneſs: let it grow.

"Let knowledge grow from more to more,
But more of reverence in us dwell;
That mind and ſoul, according well,
May make one muſic as before.

"But vaſter. We are fools and ſlight;
We mock Thee when we do not fear;
But help Thy fooliſh ones to bear;
Help Thy vain worlds to bear Thy light."

TENNYSON.

Preface.

IT is of ſome importance to underſtand rightly what principle really underlies the Divine Education of the Human Race, becauſe we may be ſure that ſuch ſhould be our rule in training and educating each Individual member.

Two ideas ſeem now in force; one a combination of Hope and Fear, by

which ſome teachers think it beſt to educate—Fear of a Material Hell, Hope of a not much leſs Material Heaven. Theſe are the ultimates, up to which the leſſer rewards and puniſhments lead.

There is alſo the doctrine of the Divine Paternity of each individual ſoul, in virtue of which every member of the Race can be appealed to as a Child of God, and be urged to live as becomes ſuch high relationſhip.

The writer of this Treatiſe thinks the latter is the true mode of dealing

with the ſubject; and although he calls not on any haſty traveller, who may be impatient to reach his night quarters, to turn aſide from the eminence from which he is gazing—yet he believes that he ſees ſomewhat more than the preſcribed road of his time: that he ſees ſomewhat of the plan by which the Race has hitherto been educated: and he obtains, therefrom, ſome hints and ſuggeſtions as to its future deſtiny.

He does not offer theſe thoughts as the ſum and ſubſtance of the matter, but rather as ſuggeſtions tending towards the diſcovery of fuller truth

through ſome other minds. And in this mood he ſeems to harmonize well with thoſe who are expecting, not a *new* Revelation, but an ever-growing development of the *meaning* of that with which God has already furniſhed us: for aſſuredly we have not yet fathomed the infinite depths of the Divine Love for His Creatures. In our "Schemes of Redemption," and "Plans of Salvation," we have not yet reached the full meaning of that name under which God has revealed Himſelf in theſe latter days—OUR FATHER.

In our eagerneſs to prove the damna-

tion of every ſoul who does not believe this or that dogma, we are in danger of forgetting that Chriſtianity is either a Goſpel of Salvation, or is valueleſs: and we overlook the inevitable neceſſity that the human mind muſt paſs through phaſes of ignorance, doubt, and even error, before it can become capable of receiving pure truth.

All the laws of the Univerſe have had exiſtence from the beginning, yet how recently is it that Electricity has been diſcovered? and do we yet know all which this power implies?

Did the earth ever do other than go round the ſun? yet how long is it ſince man found this out?

And are the ſpiritual truths of man's nature more eaſily diſcerned than the phyſical phenomena which ſurround him? Why ſhould there not be development in theſe as well as in thoſe?

Each little ſect or religion has, doubtleſs, had ſome germ of the truth within it, which has rendered it ſubſervient to the great purpoſe of fertilizing the world—but ſo long

as the profeſſors of either of them think that they are favoured Children of the Divine Father, whom He regards with a complacency with which He does not view the reſt of Humanity, ſo long is the fulneſs of God's idea not attained by them.

There may be much in this little Treatiſe which will be perplexing to men who merely read by the light of eſtabliſhed and recogniſed formulas; much, which may ſound like hereſy to thoſe who believe only that which can be found to be contained within the Articles and Creeds of their own

ſchool; but to the honeſt, earneſt Enquirer, it may ſuggeſt very profitable currents of thought, in which he may let his reaſon and imagination flow together, poſſibly in one of theſe flowing at laſt into the great ocean of Truth itſelf.

THE *EDUCATION* OF *THE HUMAN RACE.*

1.

THAT which Education is to the Individual, Revelation is to the Race.

2.

EDUCATION is Revelation coming to the Individual Man; and Revelation

is Education which has come, and is yet coming, to the Human Race.

3.

WHETHER it can be of any advantage to the ſcience of inſtruction to contemplate Education in this point of view, I will not here inquire; but in Theology it may unqueſtionably be of great advantage, and may remove many difficulties, if Revelation be conceived of as the Educator of Humanity.

4.

EDUCATION gives to Man nothing which he might not educe out of him-

ſelf; it gives him that which he might educe out of himſelf, only quicker and more eaſily. In the ſame way too, Revelation gives nothing to the human ſpecies, which the human reaſon left to itſelf might not attain; only it has given, and ſtill gives to it, the moſt important of theſe things earlier.

5.

And juſt as in Education, it is not a matter of indifference in what order the powers of a man are developed, as it cannot impart to a man all at once; ſo was God alſo neceſſitated to

maintain a certain order, and a certain meaſure in His Revelation.

6.

EVEN if the firſt man were furniſhed at once with a conception of the One God; yet it was not poſſible that this conception, imparted, and not gained by thought, ſhould ſubſiſt long in its clearneſs. As ſoon as the Human Reaſon, left to itſelf, began to elaborate it, it broke up the one Immeaſurable into many Meaſurables, and gave a note or ſign of mark to every one of theſe parts.

7.

HENCE naturally aroſe polytheiſm and idolatry. And who can ſay how many millions of years human reaſon would have been bewildered in theſe errors, even though in all places and times there were individual men who recogniſed them *as* errors, had it not pleaſed God to afford it a better direction by means of a new Impulſe?

8.

BUT when He neither could nor would reveal Himſelf any more to *each* individual man, He ſelected an individual People for His ſpecial edu-

cation; and that exactly the moſt rude and the moſt unruly, in order to begin with it from the very commencement.

9.

THIS was the Hebrew People, reſpecting whom we do not in the leaſt know what kind of Divine Worſhip they had in Egypt. For ſo deſpiſed a race of ſlaves was not permitted to take part in the worſhip of the Egyptians; and the God of their fathers was entirely unknown to them.

10.

IT is poſſible that the Egyptians

had expreſſly prohibited the Hebrews from having a God or Gods, perhaps they had forced upon them the belief that their deſpiſed race had no God, no Gods, that to have a God or Gods was the prerogative of the ſuperior Egyptians only, and this may have been ſo held in order to have the power of tyranniſing over them with a greater ſhow of fairneſs. Do Chriſtians even now do much better with their ſlaves?

II.

To this rude people God cauſed Himſelf to be announced firſt, ſimply as "the God of their fathers," in

order to make them acquainted and familiar with the idea of a God belonging to them alſo, and to begin with confidence in Him.

12.

THROUGH the miracles with which He led them out of Egypt, and planted them in Canaan, He teſtified of Himſelf to them as a God mightier than any other God.

13.

AND as He proceeded, demonſtrating Himſelf to be the Mightieſt of all, which only One can be, He

gradually accuſtomed them thus to the idea of THE ONE.

14.

BUT how far was this conception of The One, below the true tranſcendental conception of the One which Reaſon learnt to derive, ſo late with certainty, from the conception of the Infinite One?

15.

ALTHOUGH the beſt of the people were already more or leſs approaching the true conception of the One only, the people as a whole could not for a long time elevate themſelves to it.

And this was the ſole true reaſon why they ſo often abandoned their one GOD, and expected to find the One, *i.e.*, as they meant, the Mightieſt, in ſome God or other, belonging to another people.

16.

BUT of what kind of moral education was a people ſo raw, ſo incapable of abſtract thoughts, and ſo entirely in their childhood capable? Of none other but ſuch as is adapted to the age of children, an education by rewards and puniſhments addreſſed to the ſenſes.

17.

HERE too Education and Revelation meet together. As yet God could give to His people no other religion, no other law than one through obedience to which they might hope to be happy, or through diſobedience to which they muſt fear to be unhappy. For as yet their regards went no further than this earth. They knew of no immortality of the ſoul; they yearned after no life to come. But now to reveal theſe things to one whoſe reaſon had as yet ſo little growth, what would it have been but the

ſame fault in the Divine Rule as is committed by the ſchoolmaſter, who chooſes to hurry his pupil too rapidly, and boaſt of his progreſs, rather than thoroughly to ground him?

18.

BUT, it will be aſked, to what purpoſe was this education of ſo rude a people, a people with whom God had to begin ſo entirely from the beginning? I reply, in order that in the proceſs of time He might employ particular members of this nation as the Teachers of other people. He was bringing up in them the future

Teachers of the human race. It was Jews who became their teachers, none but Jews; only men out of a people ſo brought up, could be their teachers.

19.

For to proceed. When the Child by dint of blows and careſſes had grown and was now come to years of underſtanding, the Father ſent it at once into foreign countries: and here it recogniſed at once the Good which in its Father's houſe it had poſſeſſed, and not been conſcious of.

20.

While God guided His choſen

people through all the degrees of a childlike education, the other nations of the earth had gone on by the light of reaſon. The moſt part had remained far behind the choſen people. Only a few had got before them. And this too, takes place with children, who are allowed to grow up left to themſelves: many remain quite raw, ſome educate themſelves even to an aſtoniſhing degree.

21.

But as theſe more fortunate few prove nothing againſt the uſe and the neceſſity of Education, ſo the few

heathen nations, who even appear to have made a ſtart in the knowledge of God before the choſen people, prove nothing againſt a Revelation. The Child of Education begins with ſlow yet ſure footſteps; it is late in overtaking many a more happily organiſed child of nature; but it *does* overtake it; and thenceforth can never be c ſtanced by it again.

22.

SIMILARLY — Putting aſide the doctrine of the Unity of God, which in a way is found, and in a way is not found, in the books of the Old

Teſtament—that the doctrine of immortality at leaſt is not diſcoverable in it, is wholly foreign to it, that all doctrine connected therewith of reward and puniſhment in a future life, proves juſt as little againſt the Divine origin of theſe books. Notwithſtanding the abſence of theſe doctrines the account of miracles and prophecies may be perfectly true. For let us ſuppoſe that theſe doctrines were not only wanting therein, but even that they were not at all true; let us ſuppoſe that for mankind all was over in this life; would the Being of God be for this reaſon leſs demonſtrated? Would

God be for this leſs at liberty, would it leſs become Him, to take immediate charge of the temporal fortunes of any people out of this periſhable race? The miracles which He performed for the Jews, the prophecies which He cauſed to be recorded through them, were ſurely not for the few mortal Jews, in whoſe time they had happened and been recorded: He had His intentions therein in reference to the whole Jewiſh people, to the entire Human Race, which, perhaps, is deſtined to remain on earth for ever, though every individual Jew and every individual man die for ever.

23.

ONCE more, The abſence of thoſe doctrines in the writings of the Old Teſtament proves nothing againſt their Divinity. Moſes was ſent from God even though the ſanction of his law only extended to this life. For why ſhould it extend further? He was ſurely ſent only to the Iſraelitiſh people, to the Iſraelitiſh people *of that time*, and his commiſſion was perfectly adapted to the knowledge, capacities, yearnings of the *then exiſting* Iſraelitiſh people, as well as to the deſtination of that which belonged to the future. And this is ſufficient.

24.

So far ought Warburton to have gone, and no further. But that learned man overdrew the bow. Not content that the abſence of theſe doctrines was no *diſcredit* to the Divine miſſion of Moſes, it muſt even be a *proof* to him of the Divinity of the miſſion. And if he had only ſought this proof in the adaptation of ſuch a law to ſuch a people!

But he betook himſelf to the hypotheſis of a miraculous ſyſtem continued in an unbroken line from Moſes to Chriſt, according to which, God had made every individual Jew

exactly happy or unhappy, in proportion as his obedience or diſobedience to the law deſerved. He would have it that this miraculous ſyſtem had compenſated for the want of thoſe doctrines (of eternal rewards and puniſhments, &c.,) without which no ſtate can ſubſiſt; and that ſuch a compenſation even proved what that want at firſt ſight appeared to negative.

25.

How well it was that Warburton could by no argument prove or even make likely this continuous miracle, in which he placed the exiſtence of

the Iſraelitiſh Theocracy! For could he have done ſo, in truth, he could then, and not till then, have made the difficulty really inſuperable, to me at leaſt. For that which was meant to prove the Divine character of the Miſſion of Moſes, would have rendered the matter itſelf doubtful, which God, it is true, did not intend *then* to reveal; but which, on the other hand, He certainly would not render unattainable.

26.

I EXPLAIN myſelf by that which is a picture of Revelation. A Primer

for children may fairly paſs over in ſilence this or that important piece of the knowledge or art which it expounds, reſpecting which the Teacher judged, that it is not yet fitted for the capacities of the children for whom he was writing. But it muſt contain abſolutely nothing which blocks up the way towards the knowledge which is held back, or miſleads the children from it. Rather far, all the approaches towards it muſt be carefully left open; and to lead them away from even one of theſe approaches, or to cauſe them to enter it later than they need, would alone be enough to change the mere

imperfection of ſuch a Primer into an actual fault.

27.

In the ſame way, in the writings of the Old Teſtament thoſe Primers for the rude Iſraelitiſh people, unpractiſed in thought, the doctrines of the immortality of the ſoul, and future recompenſes, might be fairly left out: but they were bound to contain nothing which could have even procraſtinated the progreſs of the people, for whom they were written, in their way to this grand truth. And to ſay but a ſmall thing, what could have more

procraſtinated it than the promiſe of ſuch a miraculous recompenſe in this life? A promiſe made by Him who promiſes nothing that He does not perform.

28.

For although in the unequal diſtribution of the goods of this life, Virtue and Vice ſeem to be taken little into conſideration, although this unequal diſtribution does not exactly afford a ſtrong proof of the immortality of the ſoul and of a life to come, in which this difficulty will be reſolved hereafter, it is certain that without this difficulty the human

underſtanding would not for a long time, perhaps never, have arrived at better or firmer proofs. For what was to impel it to ſeek for theſe better proofs? Mere curioſity?

29.

An Iſraelite here and there, no doubt, might have extended to every individual member of the entire commonwealth, thoſe promiſes and threatenings which belonged to it as a whole, and be firmly perſuaded that whoſoever ſhould be pious muſt alſo be happy, and that whoever was unhappy muſt be bearing the penalty of

his wrong-doing, which penalty would forthwith change itſelf into bleſſing, as ſoon as he abandoned his ſin. Such a one appears to have written Job, for the plan of it is entirely in this ſpirit.

30.

But daily experience could not poſſibly be permitted to confirm this belief, or elſe it would have been all over, for ever, with the people who had this experience, ſo far as all recognition and reception was concerned of the truth as yet unfamiliar to them. For if the pious were abſolutely happy, and it alſo of courſe was a neceſſary

part of his happineſs that his ſatisfaction ſhould be broken by no uneaſy thoughts of death, and that he ſhould die old, and ſatisfied with life to the full: how could he yearn after another life? and how could he reflect upon a thing after which he did not yearn? But if the pious did not reflect thereupon, who then ſhould reflect? The tranſgreſſor? he who felt the puniſhment of his miſdeeds, and if he curſed this life muſt have ſo gladly renounced that other exiſtence?

31.

Much leſs did it ſignify if an

Iſraelite here and there directly and expreſſly denied the immortality of the ſoul and future recompenſe, on account of the law having no reference thereto. The denial of an individual, had it even been a Solomon, did not arreſt the progreſs of the general reaſon, and was even in itſelf a proof that the nation had now come a great ſtep nearer the truth. For individuals only deny what the many are bringing into conſideration; and to bring into conſideration that, concerning which no one troubled himſelf at all before, is half way to knowledge.

32.

LET us alſo acknowledge that it is a heroic obedience to obey the laws of God ſimply becauſe they are God's laws, and not becauſe He has promiſed to reward the obedience to them here and there; to obey them even though there be an entire deſpair of future recompenſe, and uncertainty reſpecting a temporal one.

33.

MUST not a people educated in this heroic obedience towards God have been deſtined, muſt they not have been capable beyond all others of executing

Divine purpoſes of quite a ſpecial character? Let the ſoldier, who pays blind obedience to his leader, become alſo convinced of his leader's wiſdom, and then ſay what that leader may not undertake to achieve with him.

34.

As yet the Jewiſh people had reverenced in their Jehovah rather the mightieſt than the wiſeſt of all Gods; as yet they had rather feared Him as a jealous God than loved Him: a proof this too, that the conceptions which they had of their eternal One God were not exactly the right con-

ceptions which we ſhould have of God. However, now the time was come that theſe conceptions of theirs were to be expanded, ennobled, rectified, to accompliſh which God availed Himſelf of a quite natural means, a better and more correct meaſure, by which it got the opportunity of appreciating Him.

35.

INSTEAD of, as hitherto, appreciating Him in contraſt with the miſerable idols of the ſmall neighbouring peoples, with whom they lived in conſtant rivalry, they began, in captivity under the wiſe Perſians, to meaſure Him

againſt the "Being of all Beings" ſuch as a more diſciplined reaſon recogniſed and reverenced.

36.

REVELATION had guided their reaſon, and now, all at once, reaſon gave clearneſs to their Revelation.

37.

THIS was the firſt reciprocal influence which theſe two (Reaſon and Revelation) exerciſed on one another; and ſo far is the mutual influence from being unbecoming to the Author of them both, that without it either of them would have been uſeleſs.

38.

THE child, ſent abroad, ſaw other children who knew more, who lived more becomingly, and aſked itſelf, in confuſion, "Why do I not know that too? Why do I not live ſo too? Ought I not to have been taught and admoniſhed of all this in my Father's houſe?" Thereupon it again ſought out its Primer, which had long been thrown into a corner, in order to throw off the blame upon the Primer. But behold, it diſcovers that the blame does not reſt upon the books, that the ſhame is ſolely its own, for not having, long ago, known

this very thing, and lived in this very way.

39.

SINCE the Jews, by this time, through the medium of the pure Perſian doctrine, recogniſed in their Jehovah, not ſimply the greateſt of all national deities, but GOD; and ſince they could the more readily find Him and indicate Him to others in their ſacred writings, inaſmuch as He was really in them; and ſince they manifeſted as great an averſion for ſenſuous repreſentations, or at all events were inſtructed in theſe Scrip-

tures, to have an averſion to them as great as the Perſians had always felt; what wonder that they found favour in the eyes of Cyrus, with a Divine Worſhip which he recogniſed as being, no doubt, far below pure Sabeiſm, but yet far above the rude idolatries which in its ſtead had taken poſſeſſion of the forſaken land of the Jews.

40.

THUS enlightened reſpecting the treaſures which they had poſſeſſed without knowing it, they returned, and became quite another people, whoſe firſt care it was to give perma-

nency to this illumination amongſt themſelves. Soon an apoſtacy and idolatry among them was out of the queſtion. For it is poſſible to be faithleſs to a national deity, but never to God, after He has once been recogniſed.

41.

THE theologians have tried to explain this complete change in the Jewiſh people in a different way; and one, who has well demonſtrated the inſufficiency of theſe explanations, at laſt was for giving us, as the true

account—"the viſible fulfilment of the prophecies which had been ſpoken and written reſpecting the Babyloniſh captivity and the reſtoration from it." But even this reaſon can be only ſo far the true one, as it preſuppoſes the, by this time, exalted ideas of God. The Jews muſt by this time have recogniſed that to do miracles, and to predict the future, belonged only to God, both of which they had aſcribed formerly to falſe idols, by which it came to paſs that even miracles and prophecies had hitherto made ſo weak an impreſſion upon them.

42.

DOUBTLESS the Jews were made more acquainted with the doctrine of immortality among the Chaldeans and Perſians. They became more familiar with it too in the ſchools of the Greek Philoſophers in Egypt.

43.

HOWEVER, as this doctrine was not in the ſame condition in reference to their Scriptures that the doctrine of God's Unity and Attributes were—ſince the former were entirely overlooked by that ſenſual people, while the latter would be ſought

for:—and ſince too, for the former, previous exerciſing was neceſſary, and as yet there had been only *hints* and *alluſions*, the faith in the immortality of the ſoul could naturally never be the faith of the entire people. It was and continued to be only the creed of a certain ſection of them.

44.

An example of what I mean by "previous exerciſing" for the doctrine of immortality, is the Divine threatenings of puniſhing the miſdeeds of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation.

This accuſtomed the fathers to live in thought with their remoteſt poſterity, and to feel, as it were beforehand, the misfortune which they had brought upon theſe guiltleſs ones.

45.

By an alluſion I mean that which was intended only to excite curioſity and to occaſion queſtions. As, for inſtance, the oft-recurring mode of expreſſion, deſcribing death by "he was gathered to his fathers."

46.

By a "hint" I mean that which

already contains any germ, out of which the, as yet, held back truth allows itſelf to be developed. Of this character was the inference of Chriſt from the naming of God "the God of Abraham, Iſaac, and Jacob." This hint appears to me to be unqueſtionably capable of being worked out into a ſtrong proof.

47.

In ſuch previous exercitations, alluſions, hints, conſiſts the *poſitive* perfection of a Primer; juſt as the above-mentioned peculiarity of not throwing difficulties or hindrances

in the way to the ſuppreſſed truth, conſtitutes the *negative* perfection of ſuch a book.

48.

ADD to all this the clothing and the ſtyle.

1. The clothing of abſtract truths, which were not entirely to be passed over, in allegories and inſtructive ſingle circumſtances, which were narrated as actual occurrences. Of this character are the Creation under the image of growing Day; the Origin of Evil in the ſtory of the

Forbidden Tree; the ſource of the variety of languages in the hiſtory of the Tower of Babel, &c.

49.

2. THE ſtyle—ſometimes plain and ſimple, ſometimes poetical, throughout full of tautologies, but of ſuch a kind as practiſe ſagacity, ſince they ſometimes appear to be ſaying ſomething elſe, and yet the ſame thing; ſometimes the ſame thing over again, and yet to ſignify or to be capable of ſignifying, at the bottom, ſomething elſe:—

50.

AND then you have all the properties of excellence which belong to a Primer for a childlike people, as well as for children.

51.

BUT every Primer is only for a certain age. To delay the child, that has outgrown it, longer in it than it was intended for, is hurtful. For to be able to do this in a way in any ſort profitable, you muſt inſert into it more than there is really in it, and extract from it more than it can contain. You muſt look for and

make too much of alluſions and hints; ſqueeze allegories too cloſely; interpret examples too circumſtantially; preſs too much upon words. This gives the child a petty, crooked, hairſplitting underſtanding: it makes him full of myſteries, ſuperſtitions; full of contempt for all that is comprehenſible and eaſy.

52.

THE very way in which the Rabbins handled *their* ſacred books! The very character which they thereby imparted to the character of their people!

53.

A BETTER Inſtructor muſt come and tear the exhauſted Primer from the child's hands. CHRIST came!

54.

THAT portion of the human race which God had willed to comprehend in one Educational plan, was ripe for the ſecond ſtep of Education. He had, however, only willed to comprehend on ſuch a plan, one which by language, mode of action, government, and other natural and political relationſhips, was already united in itſelf.

55.

THAT is, this portion of the human race was come ſo far in the exerciſe of its reaſon, as to need, and to be able to make uſe of, nobler and worthier motives of moral action than temporal rewards and puniſhments, which had hitherto been its guides. The child had become a youth. Sweetmeats and toys have given place to the budding deſire to be as free, as honoured, and as happy as its elder brother.

56.

FOR a long time, already, the beſt

individuals of that portion of the human race (called above the eldeſt brother) had been accuſtomed to let themſelves be ruled by the ſhadow of ſuch nobler motives. The Greek and Roman did everything to live on after this life, even if it were only in the remembrance of their fellow-citizens.

57.

It was time that another *true* life to be expected after this ſhould gain an influence over the youth's actions.

58.

AND ſo Chriſt was the firſt certain practical Teacher of the immortality of the ſoul.

59.

THE firſt *certain* Teacher. Certain, through the prophecies which were fulfilled in Him; certain, through the miracles which He achieved; certain, through His own revival after a death through which He had ſealed His doctrine. Whether we can ſtill *prove* this revival, theſe miracles, I put aſide, as I leave on one ſide *who* the Perſon of Chriſt was. All *that*

may have been at that time of great weight for the *reception* of His doctrine, but it is now no longer of the same importance for the recognition of the *truth* of His doctrine.

60.

THE first *practical* Teacher. For it is one thing to conjecture, to wish, and to believe the immortality of the soul, as a philosophic speculation: quite another thing to direct the inner and outer acts by it.

61.

AND this at least Christ was the

firſt to teach. For although, already before Him, the belief had been introduced among many nations, that bad actions have yet to be puniſhed in that life; yet they were only ſuch actions as were injurious to civil ſociety, and conſequently, too, had already had their puniſhment in civil ſociety. To enforce an inward purity of heart in reference to another life, was reſerved for Him alone.

62.

His diſciples have faithfully propagated theſe doctrines: and if they had even had no other merit, than that of

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having effected a more general publication, among other nations, of a Truth which Chriſt had appeared to have deſtined only for the Jews, yet would they have, even on that account alone, to be reckoned among the Benefactors and Foſterers of the Human Race.

63.

If, however, they tranſplanted this one great Truth together with other doctrines, whoſe truth was leſs enlightening, whoſe uſefulneſs was of a leſs exalted character, how could it be otherwiſe? Let us not blame them for this, but rather ſeriouſly examine

whether theſe very commingled doctrines have not become a new *impulſe* of *direction* for human reaſon.

64.

AT leaſt, it is already clear that the New Teſtament Scriptures, in which theſe doctrines after ſome time were found preſerved, have afforded, and still afford, the ſecond better Primer for the race of man.

65.

FOR ſeven hundred years paſt they have exerciſed human reaſon more

than all other books, and enlightened it more, were it even only through the light which the human reaſon itſelf threw into them.

66.

It would have been impoſſible for any other book to become ſo generally known among different nations: and indiſputably, the fact that modes of thought ſo diverſe from each other have been occupied on the ſame book, has helped on the human reaſon more than if every nation had had its *own* Primer ſpecially for itſelf.

67.

IT was alſo highly neceſſary that each people for a period ſhould hold this Book as the *ne plus ultra* of their knowledge. For the youth muſt conſider his Primer as the firſt of all books, that the impatience to finiſh this book, may not hurry him on to things for which he has, as yet, laid no baſis.

68.

AND one thing is alſo of the greateſt importance even now. Thou abler ſpirit, who art fretting and reſtleſs over the last page of the Primer, beware!

Beware of letting thy weaker fellow-ſcholars mark what thou perceiveſt afar, or what thou art beginning to ſee!

69.

UNTIL theſe weaker fellow-ſcholars are up with thee, rather return once more back into this Primer, and examine whether that which thou takeſt only for duplicates of the method, for a blunder in the teaching, is not perhaps ſomething more.

70.

THOU haſt ſeen in the childhood of the human race, reſpecting the doc-

trine of God's unity, that God makes immediate revelations of mere truths of reaſon, or has permitted and cauſed pure truths of reaſon to be taught, for ſome time, as truths of immediate revelation, in order to promulgate them the more rapidly, and ground them the more firmly.

71.

THOU experienceſt in the boyhood of the Race the ſame thing in reference to the doctrine of the immortality of the ſoul. It is *preached* in the better Primer as a Revelation, inſtead of *taught* as a reſult of human reaſon.

72.

As we by this time can diſpenſe with the Old Teſtament, in reference to the doctrine of the unity of God, and as we are by degrees beginning alſo to be leſs dependent on the New Teſtament, in reference to the immortality of the ſoul: might there not in this Book alſo be other truths of the ſame ſort prefigured, mirrored as it were, which we are to marvel at, as revelations, exactly ſo long as until the time ſhall come when Reaſon ſhall have learned to educe them, out of its other demonſtrated truths, and bind them up with them?

73.

For inſtance, the doctrine of the Trinity. How if this doctrine ſhould at laſt, after endleſs errors, right and left, only bring men on the road to recogniſe that God cannot poſſibly be One in the ſenſe in which finite things are one, that even His unity muſt be a tranſcendental unity, which does not exclude a ſort of plurality? Muſt not God at leaſt have the moſt perfect conception of Himſelf, *i.e.*, a conception in which is found every thing which is in Him? But would every thing be found in it which is in Him, if a mere conception, a mere

poſſibility, were found even of His neceſſary Reality as well as of His other qualities? This poſſibility exhauſts the being of His other qualities. Does it that of His neceſſary Reality? I think not. Conſequently God can either have no perfect conception of Himſelf at all, or this perfect conception is juſt as neceſſarily real, *i.e.*, actually exiſtent, as He Himſelf is. Certainly the image of myſelf in the mirror is nothing but an empty repreſentation of me, becauſe it only has that of me upon the ſurface of which beams of light fall. But now if this image had everything, everything

without exception, which I have myſelf, would it then ſtill be a mere empty repreſentation, or not rather a true reduplication of myſelf? When I believe that I recogniſe in God a ſimilar reduplication, I perhaps do not ſo much err, as that my language is inſufficient for my ideas: and ſo much at leaſt remains for ever incontrovertible, that they who wiſh to make the idea thereof popular for comprehenſion, could ſcarcely have expreſſed themſelves more intelligibly and ſuitably than by giving the name of a Son begotten from Eternity.

74.

AND the doctrine of Original Sin. How, if at last everything were to convince us, that man standing on the first and lowest step of his humanity, is not so entirely master of his actions as to be *able* to obey moral laws!

75.

AND the doctrine of the Son's satisfaction. How, if at last, all compelled us to assume that God, in spite of that original incapacity of man, chose rather to give him moral laws, and forgive him all transgressions in consideration of His Son, *i.e.*, in con-

ſideration of the ſelf-exiſtent total of all His own perfections, compared with which, and in which, all imperfections of the individual diſappear, than *not* to give him thoſe laws, and then to exclude him from all moral bleſſedneſs, which cannot be conceived of without moral laws?

76.

LET it not be objected that ſpeculations of this deſcription upon the myſteries of religion are forbidden. The word myſtery ſignified, in the firſt ages of Chriſtianity, ſomething

quite different from what it means now: and the cultivation of revealed truths into truths of reaſon, is abſolutely neceſſary, if the human race is to be aſſiſted by them. When they were revealed they were certainly no truths of reaſon, but they were revealed in order to become ſuch. They were like the "that makes"—of the ciphering maſter, which he ſays to the boys, beforehand, in order to direct them, thereby in their reckoning. If the ſcholars were to be ſatisfied with the "that makes," they would never learn to calculate, and would fruſtrate the intention with which their good

maſter gave them a guiding clue in their work.

77.

AND why ſhould not we too, by means of a religion whoſe hiſtorical truth, if you will, looks dubious, be conducted in a ſimilar way to cloſer and better conceptions of the Divine Being, our own nature, our relation to God, truths at which the human reaſon would never have arrived of itſelf?

78.

IT is not true that ſpeculations upon

theſe things have ever done harm or become injurious to the body politic. You muſt reproach, not the ſpeculations, but the folly and the tyranny of checking them. You muſt lay the blame on thoſe who would not permit men having their own ſpeculations, to exerciſe them.

79.

On the contrary, ſpeculations of this ſort, whatever the reſult, are unqueſtionably the moſt fitting exerciſes of the human heart, generally, ſo long as the human heart, generally, is at

beſt only capable of loving virtue for the ſake of its eternal bleſſed conſequences.

80.

For in this ſelfiſhneſs of the human heart, to will to practiſe the underſtanding too, only on that which concerns our corporal needs, would be to blunt rather than ſharpen it. It abſolutely *will* be exerciſed on ſpiritual objects, if it is to attain its perfect illumination, and bring out that purity of heart which makes us capable of loving virtue for its own ſake alone.

81.

OR, is the human ſpecies never to arrive at this higheſt ſtep of illumination and purity?—Never?

82.

NEVER?—Let me not think this blaſphemy, All Merciful! Education has its goal, in the Race, no leſs than in the Individual. That which is educated is educated for *ſomething*.

83.

THE flattering proſpects which are opened to the pupil, the Honour and Well-being which are painted to him,

what are they more than means of educating him to become a man, who, when theſe proſpects of Honour and Well-being have vaniſhed, ſhall be able to do his *Duty?*

84.

THIS is the aim of *human* education, and ſhould not the Divine education extend as far? Is that which is ſucceſsful in the way of Art with the individual, not to be ſucceſsful in the way of Nature with the whole? Blaſphemy! Blaſphemy!

85.

No! It will come! it will aſſur-

edly come! the time of the perfecting, when man, the more convinced his underſtanding feels itſelf of an ever better Future, will nevertheleſs not be neceſſitated to borrow motives of action from this Future; for he will do the Right becauſe it *is* right, not becauſe arbitrary rewards are annexed thereto, which formerly were intended ſimply to fix and ſtrengthen his unſteady gaze in recogniſing the inner, better, rewards of well-doing.

86.

It will aſſuredly come! the time of

a new eternal Goſpel, which is promiſed us in the Primer of the New Teſtament itſelf!

87.

PERHAPS even ſome enthuſiaſts of the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries had caught a glimpſe of a beam of this new eternal Goſpel, and only erred in that they predicted its outburſt as ſo near to their own time.

88.

PERHAPS their "Three Ages of the World" were not ſo empty a ſpecu-

lation after all, and aſſuredly they had no contemptible views when they taught that the New Covenant muſt become as much antiquated as the Old has been. There remained by them the ſimilarity of the economy of the ſame God. Ever, to let them ſpeak my words, ever the ſelf-ſame plan of the Education of the Race.

89.

ONLY they were premature. Only they believed that they could make their contemporaries, who had ſcarcely outgrown their childhood, without

enlightenment, without preparation, men worthy of their *Third Age.*

90.

AND it was juſt this which made them enthuſiaſts. The enthuſiaſt often caſts true glances into the future, but for this future he cannot wait. He wiſhes this future accelerated, and accelerated through him. That for which Nature takes thouſands of years is to mature itſelf in the moment of his exiſtence. For what poſſeſſion has he in it if that which he recogniſes as the Beſt does not become the beſt in his life time? Does he come

back? Does he expect to come back? Marvellous only that this enthuſiaſtic expectation does not become more the faſhion among enthuſiaſts.

91.

Go thine inſcrutable way, Eternal Providence! Only let me not deſpair in Thee becauſe of this inſcrutableneſs. Let me not deſpair in Thee, even if Thy ſteps appear to me to be going back. It is not true that the ſhorteſt line is always ſtraight.

92.

Thou haſt on Thine Eternal Way

ſo much to carry on together, ſo much to do! ſo many aſide ſteps to take! And what if it were as good as proved that the vaſt ſlow wheel, which brings mankind nearer to this perfection is only put in motion by ſmaller, ſwifter wheels, each of which contributes its own individual unit thereto?

93.

It is ſo! The very ſame Way by which the Race reaches its perfection, muſt every individual man — one ſooner, another later—have travelled over. Have travelled over in one and

the ſame life? Can he have been, in one and the ſelf-ſame life, a ſenſual Jew and a ſpiritual Chriſtian? Can he in the ſelf-ſame life have overtaken both?

94.

SURELY not that! But why ſhould not every individual man have exiſted more than once upon this World?

95.

Is this hypotheſis ſo laughable merely becauſe it is the oldeſt? Becauſe the human underſtanding, before the ſophiſtries of the Schools had diſ-

ſipated and debilitated it, lighted upon it at once?

96.

WHY may not even I have already performed thoſe ſteps of my perfecting which bring to man only temporal puniſhments and rewards.

97.

AND once more, why not another time all thoſe ſteps, to perform which the views of Eternal Rewards ſo powerfully aſſiſt us?

98.

WHY ſhould I not come back as often as I am capable of acquiring freſh knowledge, freſh expertneſs? Do I bring away ſo much from once, that there is nothing to repay the trouble of coming back?

99.

Is this a reaſon againſt it? Or, becauſe I forget that I have been here already? Happy is it for me that I do forget. The recollection of my former condition would permit me to make only a bad uſe of the preſent.

And that which even I muſt forget *now*, is that neceſſarily forgotten for ever?

100.

Or is it a reaſon againſt the hypotheſis that ſo much time would have been loſt to me? Loſt?—And how much then ſhould I miſs?—Is not a whole Eternity mine?

THE END.

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